



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

SUNDAY, APRIL 27, 1975

JOINTLY-OWNED FISH POND
MAIN SOURCE OF INCOME FOR SOKO ISLANDERS

ASK ANYONE IN THE STREET WHERE THE SOKO ISLANDS ARE AND THE ANSWERS YOU GET MAY VARY FROM +NEAR JAPAN+ TO +OFF THE TAIWAN STRAITS+, OR JUST SIMPLY +I DON'T KNOW.+

ACTUALLY, THE SOKO ISLANDS ARE A GROUP OF SPARSELY POPULATED ISLANDS JUST OFF THE SOUTH-WESTERN TIP OF LANTAU. THE REASON WHY PEOPLE ARE NOT FAMILIAR WITH THE SOKO ISLANDS IS BECAUSE VERY FEW PEOPLE HAVE BEEN THERE.

HERE IN THIS PEACEFUL PART OF HONG KONG LIFE GOES ON AT ITS MOST LEISURELY PACE AMONG THE 200 ODD INHABITANTS, MOST OF WHOM LIVE ON THE LARGEST OF THE GROUP OF ISLANDS -- TAI AH CHAU.

NOBODY IS SURE WHEN THESE ISLANDS WERE FIRST INHABITED BUT A LARGE RITUAL BRONZE BELL THAT LIES IN A TEMPLE INDICATES THAT THE ISLANDS WERE INHABITED SOME 150 YEARS AGO.

ONE STRIKING FEATURE OF THIS ISLAND IS A LARGE MAN-MADE FISH POND.

THIS FRESH-FISH POND, WHICH IS ONE OF THE MAIN SOURCE OF INCOME FOR THE ISLANDERS, IS JOINTLY OWNED BY ALL THE FAMILIES IN THE VILLAGE.

ACCORDING TO A VILLAGE REPRESENTATIVES, MR. NG SHING-YAU, THE FISH POND SYMBOLISES CO-OPERATION AND UNITY AMONG THE VILLAGERS.

MR. NG VIEWS THE FISH POND WITH PRIDE AND CONTENTMENT.

HE SAID, +OUR FISH POND, OF COURSE, IS NO MATCH WITH THOSE IN YUEN LONG. THE PLACE WHERE THE PRESENT FISH POND NOW LIES WAS FORMERLY AGRICULTURAL LAND. BUT DUE TO ITS GOOD SUPPLY OF UNDERGROUND WATER, THE VILLAGERS DECIDED TO TURN THE AREA INTO ONE BIG FISH POND.+

EIGHTEEN PICULS OF FISH WERE PRODUCED FOR THE FIRST TIME LAST NOVEMBER WHICH FETCHED SOME \$10,000.

+SINCE THE FISH POND IS LOCATED ON PRIVATE LAND, THE FAMILIES PARTICIPATING IN THIS PROJECT HAD TO RAISE MONEY TO BUY IT.+

+THE GOVERNMENT WAS ALSO GENEROUS ENOUGH TO GRANT US SOME CROWN LAND FOR EXTENDING THE AREA.+

+THE ARMY AND THE NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION ALSO GAVE MANUAL AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE IN EXCAVATING THE LAND, SETTING UP THE WIRE NETTING AND CONSTRUCTING A NEW FOOT-PATH,+ SAID MR. NG.

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THE FISH POND, WHICH HAS A TOTAL AREA OF 15,000 SQ.FT., WAS FIRST OPENED IN JULY 1973. TO MARK ITS OPENING, ABOUT 100 BIG HEAD AND 300 COMMON CARPS WERE RELEASED INTO THE POND. THE FISH WERE FLOWN IN SPECIALLY BY AN ARMY HELICOPTER.

TALKING PROUDLY ABOUT THE POND, MR. NG SAID, +WE ADOPT THE TRADITIONAL METHOD OF FEEDING FISH ON PIG MANURE. THE MAJORITY OF THE FISH ARE SOLD AT CHEUNG CHAU WHILE SOME ARE BROUGHT TO ABERDEEN.+

NEXT TO FISH-BREEDING COMES PIG BREEDING. THE VILLAGERS GOT THEIR FIRST PIGS THROUGH DONATIONS BY THE KADOORIE EXPERIMENTAL AND EXTENSION FARM. DURING THE 1960S THERE WERE ONLY 350 PIGS BUT NOW THE NUMBER HAS RISEN TO OVER 1,000. MOST OF THEM ARE SOLD AT CHEUNG CHAU AND THE REST ARE BROUGHT TO KENNEDY TOWN.

ANOTHER EYE-CATCHING SCENERY ON THE ISLAND IS THE LONG STRETCH OF PINEAPPLE CULTIVATION ON THE HILLSIDE. PINEAPPLES WERE ALSO INTRODUCED DURING THE EARLY 1960S AND HAVE NOW BECOME ANOTHER +EXPORT+ ITEM FOR THE VILLAGERS.

VEGETABLES ARE ALSO GROWN ON THE ISLANDS BUT LIKE THE SMALL-SCALE POULTRY FARMING THERE, THEY ARE MOSTLY FOR THE VILLAGERS' OWN CONSUMPTION.

WHEN QUERIED ABOUT HOW THEY MANAGED TO TRANSPORT THEIR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS AND DAILY NECESSITIES TO AND FROM THE OUTSIDE WORLD, MR. NG SAID, +WE DEPEND ON OUR MOTOR JUNK WHICH HAS ALREADY SERVED US FOR 10 YEARS. WHEN IT WAS NEW IT COULD CARRY 19 PEOPLE BUT NOW ONLY EIGHT PASSENGERS ARE PERMITTED TO TRAVEL EACH TIME.

+THE JUNK GOES BETWEEN CHEUNG CHAU AND TAI AH CHAU FOUR TIME A WEEK.+

AS THE MOTOR JUNK IS TOO OLD TO CARRY HEAVY GOODS, THE VILLAGERS HAVE EXPRESSED THE WISH TO GET A NEW ONE WHICH, THEY ESTIMATED, WOULD COST ABOUT \$30,000. THEY HAVE ALREADY WRITTEN TO THE NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION FOR FINANCIAL AID.

DESPITE THE REMOTENESS OF THE ISLANDS THE CHILDREN ARE WELL-PROVIDED WITH EDUCATION. THE ONE-CLASSROOM SCHOOL WAS BUILT IN 1959 WHERE 28 PUPILS, ALL FROM TAI AH CHAU, ATTEND THEIR LESSONS.

MRS. LUK, THE ONLY TEACHER OF THE SCHOOL, SAID+ +LESSONS TAUGHT IN THE SCHOOL RANGE FROM PRIMARY TWO TO PRIMARY FOUR, BUT BECAUSE A NUMBER OF PARENTS REQUIRE THEIR CHILDREN TO HELP WITH THE HOUSEWORK, THE PUPILS ARE OFTEN ABSENT. VILLAGE CHILDREN WHO WISH TO ATTEND HIGHER CLASSES HAVE TO TRAVEL TO CHEUNG CHAU.

/THE MEDICAL

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THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT LAUNCH +CHI HONG+ VISITS THE ISLAND REGULARLY TO PROVIDE MEDICAL SERVICES FOR THE VILLAGERS. THE BRITISH ARMY HAVE ALSO DONATED A FIRST-AID KIT FOR USE IN EMERGENCIES.

COMMUNICATION WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD IS THROUGH A RADIO-TELEPHONE LINK WHICH HAS JUST BEEN INSTALLED. ELECTRICITY IS ALSO PROVIDED LOCALLY THROUGH A SMALL GENERATOR.

THE VILLAGERS' ONLY +OUTSIDE+ ENTERTAINMENT IS LISTENING TO THE RADIO AND WATCHING TELEVISION PROGRAMMES FROM A GOVERNMENT INSTALLED TELEVISION SET.

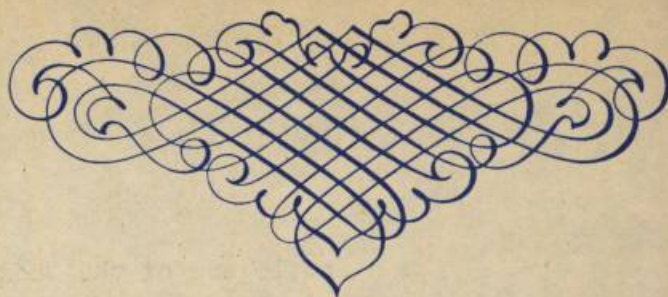
SITUATED NOT FAR AWAY FROM TAI AH CHAU IS THE SECOND LARGEST ISLAND OF THE GROUP -- SIU AH CHAU. JUST BEHIND THE LONG STRETCH OF A BEAUTIFUL BEACH IS A GROUP OF HOUSES OCCUPIED BY TWO FAMILIES.

IN THE 1960S THE POPULATION OF THIS ISLAND WAS MUCH LARGER -- 90 PEOPLE. BUT NOW ONLY FIVE PEOPLE LIVE ON SIU AH CHAU. MOST OF THE OTHERS HAD LEFT FOR THE URBAN AREAS TO SEEK A MORE EXCITING LIFE.

THE DAILY RHYTHM OF LIFE ON THESE ISLANDS IS SLOW AND PEACEFUL, ACCORDING TO MR. NG. +UNLIKE THE URBAN AREAS, WE ARE NOT THREATENED BY CRIME AND VIOLENCE. WE DO NOT NEED TO LOCK OUR DOORS EVEN AT NIGHT,+ HE SAID WITH PRIDE.

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ROYAL VISIT PRESS RELEASE



Sunday, April 27, 1975

FOCUS ON CHINESE TRADITION FOR ROYAL PROCESSION

Organisers of the procession to be held in Nathan Road on May 6 are taking pains to ensure that it will be like nothing the Queen has ever seen before.

With the exception of a representative contingent of the armed services, who will provide the guard of honour and start the procession on its route up Nathan Road, the emphasis will be entirely on traditional Chinese elements.

Commented a spokesman for the planning committee, "Because this will be the Queen's first opportunity to see Hong Kong people put on a typically Hong Kong procession, we want these traditional elements to be correct in every detail.

"As far as possible, every feature of the decorations, props and costumes, down to shoes and hairstyles, will be in accordance with historical precedents."

For this reason, the committee took the view that there should be no motorised 'floats' in the cavalcade, and that any tableau on wheels would be pushed or pulled by hand.

One such tableau should be of particular interest to the Queen because of its associations with a poem which Queen Victoria received from the then Chinese Ambassador, concerning the Goddess of the West.

Students of the New Method College have planned the tableau to depict a dance in honour of the Goddess of the West, led by the Fairy Ma.

/The legend

The legend of the Goddess also inspired a presentation by the Po Leung Kuk, which commemorates the journey of the Eight Immortals to celebrate the Goddess' birthday.

Other travellers from the pages of Chinese mythology will be the Monk Hsuan Chuang and his three disciples, the Monkey King, the Pig Pat Kai and Monk Hsia. In recreating their fabulous adventures, the Pok Oi Hospital will also be representing their dread encounter with the Ox Devil King and the Princess Iron Fan.

The heroes of the famous novel "The Water Margin" figure in an exciting dance staged by Chiu Chau Associations to the accompaniment of sticks beating together in unison.

A scroll by a Ching Dynasty artist was chosen by the Women's Associations as the basis for their entry. Depicting birds of every species paying homage to the Phoenix, the painting was offered by the artist Suen Lung in tribute to the Empress of his time, to symbolise the stability and prosperity of the country and to express the affection of the people. In this dance, the Phoenix is surrounded by her retinue of birds and by accompanying fairies.

Another popular theme of numerous Chinese scrolls, lotus blossoms provide the focus for a dance staged by the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals. Aroused by a group of merrymaking maidens, the lotus fairies join their festivities.

No Hong Kong procession would be complete without a lion dance, and the cortege for the Queen will include lions from both North and South China, with their marked differences of costume and performing styles. The North Lions will be provided by the Federation of Hong Kong Industries and the Chinese Manufacturers Association, and the South Lions by the Hong Kong Chinese Martial Arts Association.

/Bringing up

Bringing up the rear, to provide a magnificent finale to the procession, will be a Golden Dragon, 150 feet long and specially constructed for this Royal occasion. Escorted by emblems of the Pearl, Moon and Sun, the Dragon will be presented by the Hong Kong and Kowloon Kaifong Associations.

Starting at 9 p.m., the procession will take half an hour to pass the Royal Box, erected on the perimeter of Whitfield Barracks opposite St. Andrew's Church. Spectators lining the route will be able to observe its progress north along Nathan Road as far as Argyle Street, where it will turn west for dispersal at Tai Kok Tsui.